Discovering the Possibilities
with Visual Strategies

**Meeting the Communication,
Behavior & Social Skill Challenges in
Autism Spectrum Disorders
& Related Learning Needs**

Linda Hodgdon, M.Ed., CCC-SLP
**Speech and Language Pathologist
Communication Specialist
Consultant for Autism and Related Disabilities**

Consider this. . . . .

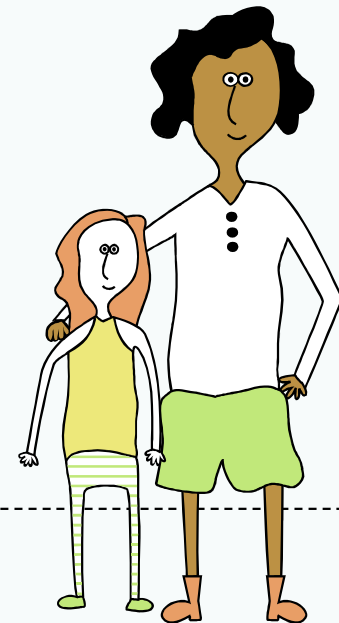**Affirming & expanding your own approach to programming for & working with students**

Influence others

A major goal is to help people understand WHY

If someone had explained visual strategies to me like you just did in this program I wouldn't have resisted so much.

A MOM

Who can benefit?

Learning what works for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders helps us know what works for many other students with communication challenges

Aphasia, Communication Disorders, ADD, Behavior Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Language Delay, Auditory Processing Disorders, Hearing Impairment, Emotional Impairment, TBI, Mental Impairment,

Down Syndrome, Bilingual . . . . . .and more

LOW TECH (Classics) vs
HI TECH (New Toys)
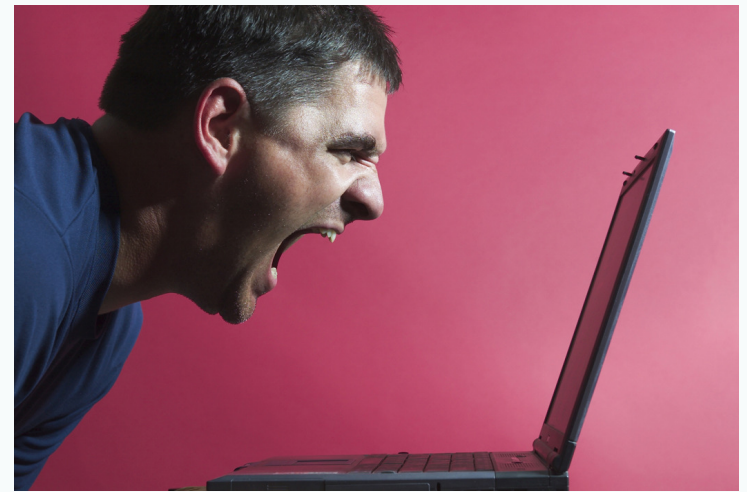
What we discover about using visual strategies:

→ **These systems apply across:**
- Ages:
  - Preschool through adult
- Skill Level:
  - Severely disabled through gifted
- Diagnosis
  - Many diagnoses
- Environments
  - School
  - Home
  - Group living situations

→ **The *concept* of using visual strategies will be consistent**

→ **The implementation will reflect differences to match the individual's needs and abilities**
- Size
- Appearance of visual representation (picture, photo, written language, object, etc.)
- Purpose of visual tool
- Method of using it
- Needs of the environment

In this program we will not cover teaching academic skills

Access the curriculum – short list

➜ **Get students ready to access the curriculum**

- Follow the routines in the environment
- Understand and follow directions
- Get information so they understand what is happening
- Participate with appropriate behavior
- Communicate wants and needs
- Interact with other people
- Participate effectively in the learning environment

There are varying degrees of what we call autism

- *Autistic Tendencies*
- *Mild*
- *PDD*
- *Severe*
- *Classic Autism*
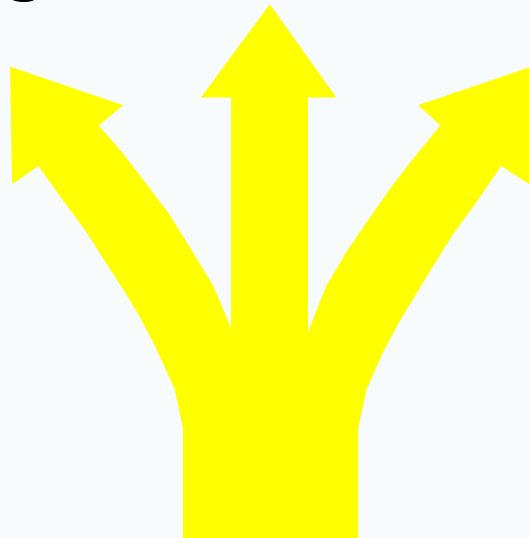- *Autism Spectrum Disorders*
- *Asperger's Syndrome*
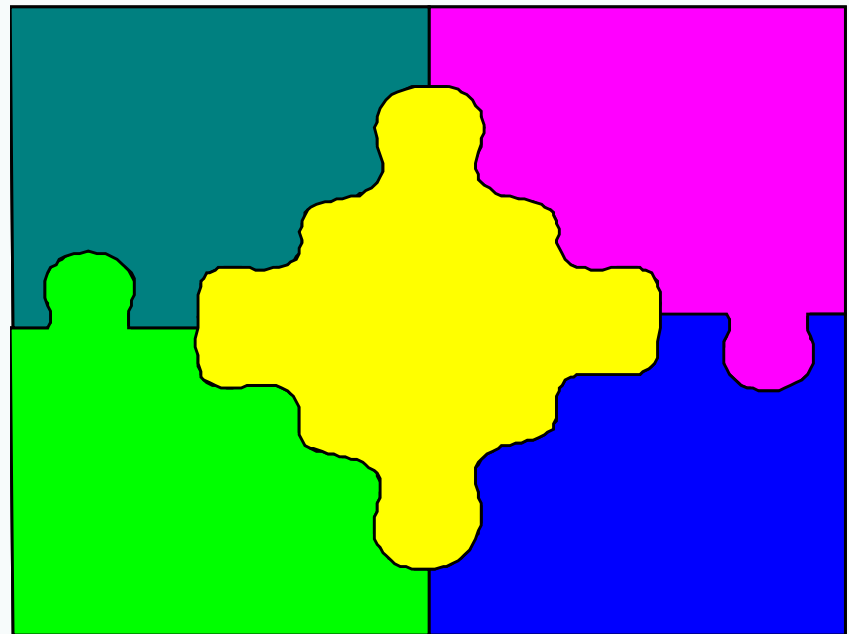
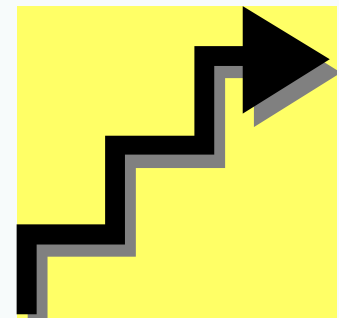# In autism there is a wide range of intelligence.
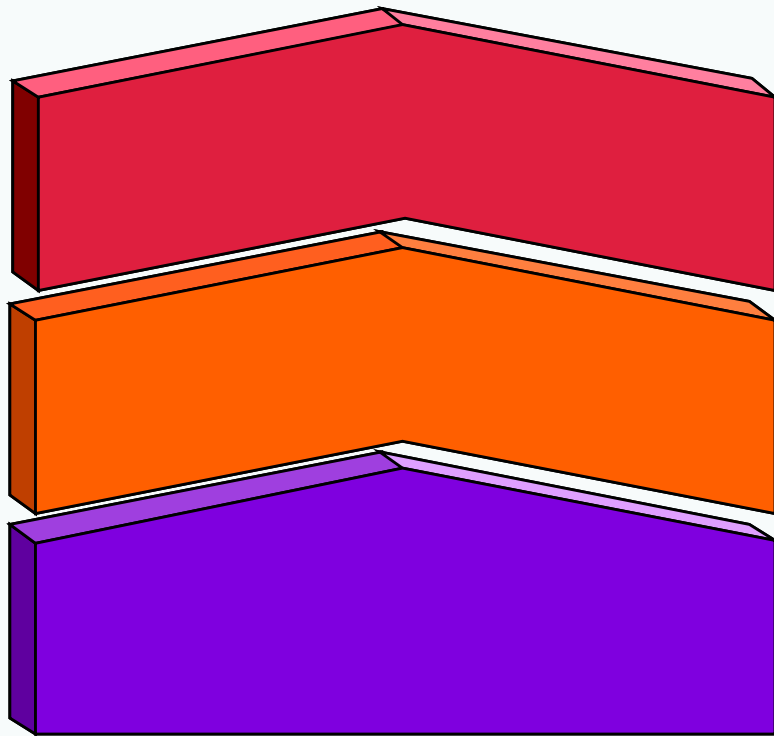
- → **Severely impaired**
- → **Moderately impaired**
- → **Average**
- → **Above average**

Think of if this way:

➤ **The diagnosis of autism begins to tell us something about** *how* **the student learns**
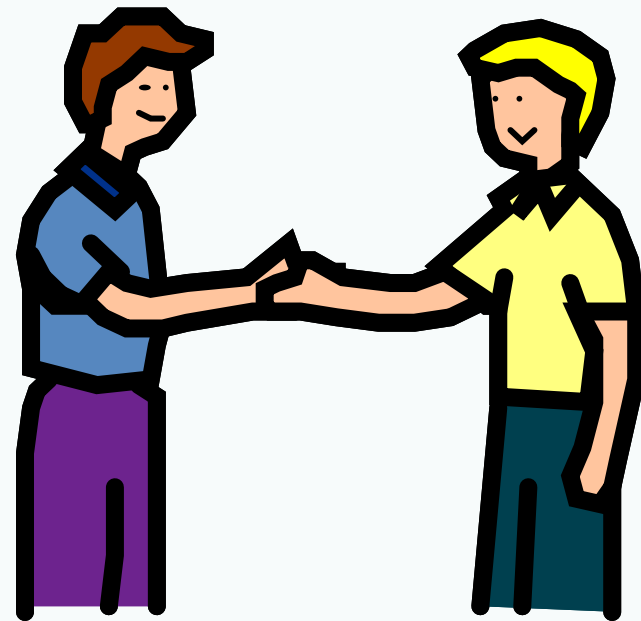
➤ **Information about the student's intellectual ability will help us discover** *how much* **a student will learn and** *how rapidly* **he/she will learn**

A primary part of the handicap:

→ **A social/ communication disability**
  - Expression
  - ***Understanding***
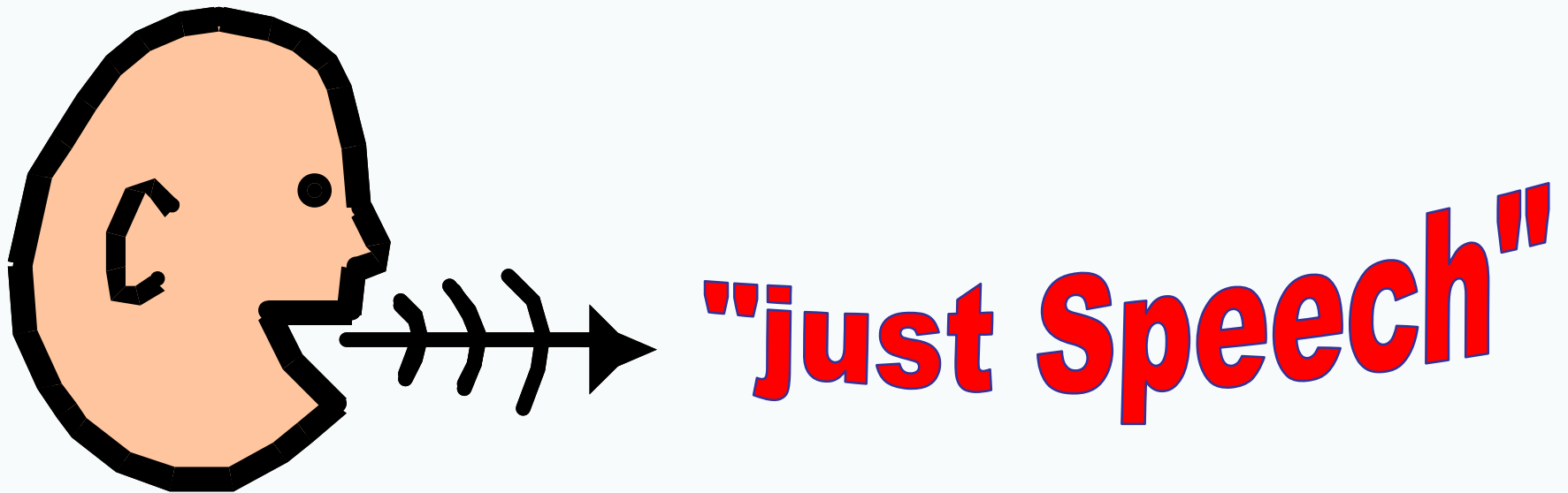
COMMUNCATION vs. SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

SPEECH & LANGUAGE

→ **Articulation**

→ **Length of utterance**

→ **Semantics**

→ **Syntax**

COMMUNICATION

→ **Where to go**

→ **What to do**

→ **What comes next**

→ **How to do it**

→ **When to go**

→ **What are my choices**

→ **What can I do**

→ **What can't I do**

Communication Involves:

- Establishing or shifting attention
- Following rapidly changing stimuli
- Taking in information
- Processing information
- Storing information
- Retrieving information
- Sending information

AUTISM-*Characteristics*

➡ **Severe communication disorder**

➡ **"Auditory problems"**

AUTISM-*Characteristics*

- ➔ **Severe communication disorder**
- ➔ **"Auditory problems"**
- ➔ **Ritualistic**
- ➔ **Resist change**
- ➔ **Difficulty with new situations or tasks**

AUTISM-*Learning Styles*

- Gestalt learners…learn in chunks
- Poor analysis & synthesis
- Like rituals and routines
- Difficulty learning new routines
- Difficulty making changes in previously learned sequences
- Lack generalization
- *Idiosyncratic*

AUTISM-*Behaviors*

→ **Range from annoying to non-compliant to aggressive to self-abusive**

→ *Idiosyncratic (Be bad to be good)*

→ **Frequent difficulty with:**

- Beginning or ending activities
- Transitions
- Change

→ **Behavior problems frequently related to communication**

To Summarize Communication Skills in Autism

Expressive
- Inefficient
- Ineffective
- ***Idiosyncratic***
- Perseveration
- Echolalia

Receptive
- Ineffective
- Poor understanding of auditory messages
- Inefficient

Relative skill taking in visual information compared to auditory abilities
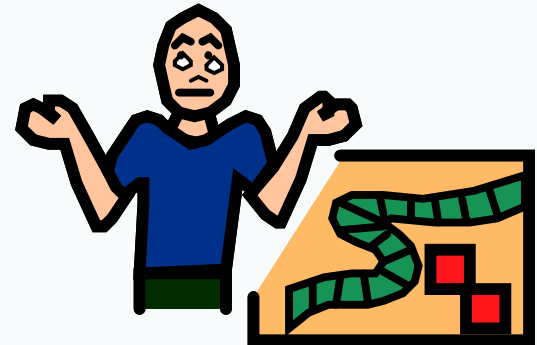
Assessment

Formal assessment tools

- Out of context
- Scores don't define functional objectives
- Don't yield information about *real functional communication*

Informal assessment

- Observation
  - A variety of people
  - A variety of environments
- Interview
- Yields information about *real functional performance*

Evaluating Communication

Form
Function
Pragmatics

FORMS of Communication

→ **Speech, vocalization**

→ **Sign language**

→ **Pointing**

→ **Gestures**

→ **Body language**

→ **Pictures**

→ **Objects**

→ **Written language**

→ **Etc.**

→ **Behaviors**

FORMS of Communication

Behaviors
- Kick, hit
- Bite
- Scream, yell
- Tantrum
- Cry
- Change proximity
- Run away
- Attack
- Self abuse

FUNCTIONS of communication
What is the purpose?

- **Request**
  - Food
  - Attention
  - Escape
  - Objects
  - Etc, etc
- **Protest**

- **Greet**
- **Ask questions**
- **Answer questions**
- **Comment**
- **Social interaction**
- **Labeling**
- **Etc.**

PRAGMATICS

Invisible skills that make communication effective

- **Attention**

- **Eye contact**

- **Responding to initiation of others**

- **Turn taking**

- **Conversation skills**

- **Breakdown & repair**
  - Persistence
  - Alternate strategies

- **Nonverbal behaviors gesture/body language**

- **Use of communication supports**

Eye Contact

I can either LOOK or
I can LISTEN

Sondra Williams. . .

"Linda you lesson today on eye contact is well worded and much want to thank you for this. . .

Many ask on the eye contact things I to share to them the same, for me to hear I to need to avert eyes else where to attend to the words and then can I to be to hyper focus to the words. . .

If forced to look will not hear or be of able to attend to them. . ."

More than just eye contact. . .
The issue is Joint Attention

- **Joint attention is a core deficit in ASD**
- **The capacity to pay attention TO and WITH another person**
- **Coordinate attention between people & objects**

- **For example: shift eye gaze, pointing,showing something, drawing another person's attention**

A letter received. . .

➡ **I AM WORKING WITH 2 2ND GRADERS WITH ASD AND I CAN'T GET THEM TO PAY ATTENTION TO ME ENOUGH TO DO SPEECH THERAPY**

Communication breakdown & repair

→ **Recognize breakdown ?**

→ **Then what?**

→ **Persistence?**

→ **Alternate strategies?**

Assess the Communication Partner

→ **The student is only 1/2 of the communication interaction.**

→ **How effective is the** *communication partner?*

FORMS of Communication

- Speech, vocalization
- Sign language
- Pointing
- Gestures
- Body language
- Pictures
- Objects
- Written language
- Etc.
- Behaviors

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"He understands EVERYTHING I say"

1. Routine language
2. Gestures
3. Communication supports
4. Learned routines
5. Environmental cues
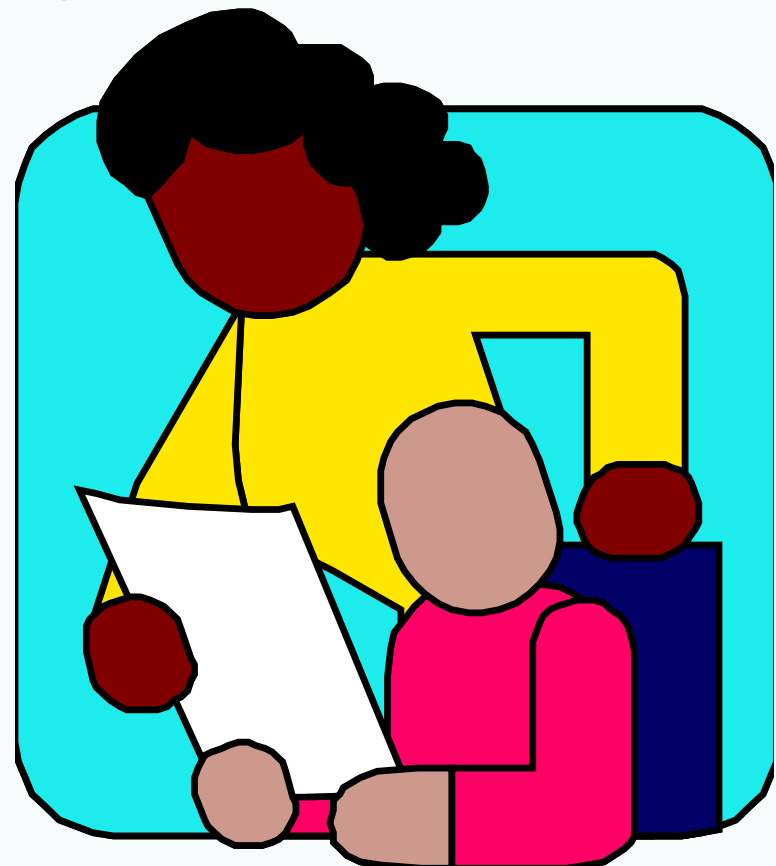
Observations of student's _receptive_ communication ability

- **What _forms_ student understands**
  - Gestures/body language
  - Environment props
  - Speech
  - Manual signs
  - Printed material
  - Signs, logos, pictures
  - Writing

- **Efficient**
- **Effective**
- **Easy to use**
- **Socially acceptable**
- **Promote independent functioning**
- **Make communication enjoyable**

RECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Frequently forgotten**
- **Often misjudged**
- **Usually severely deficient**
- **Commonly not programmed for adequately**
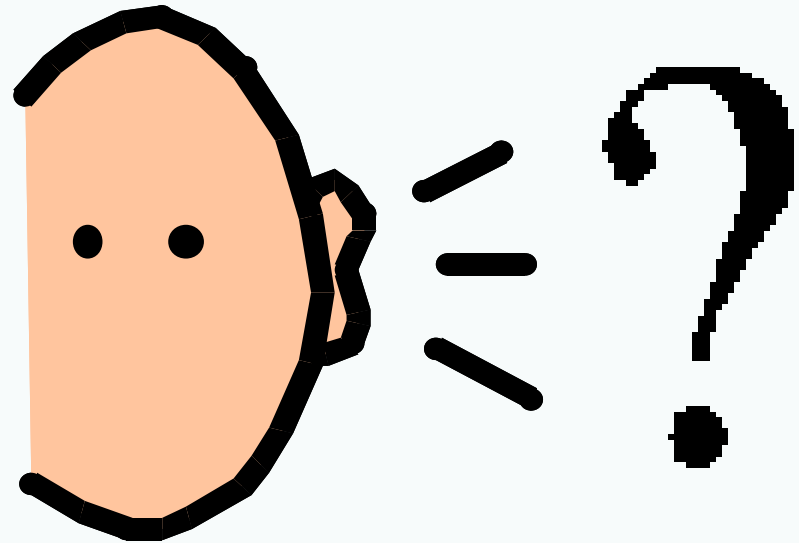
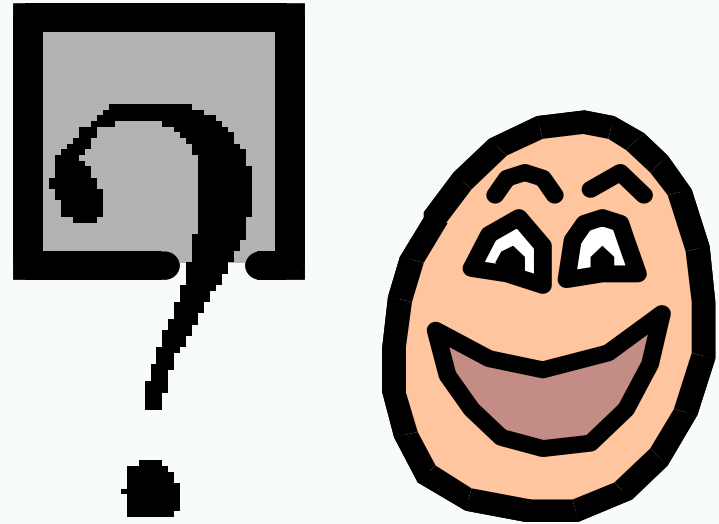# It does not matter if they are verbal or non verbal

JUST BECAUSE THEY TALK DOESN'T MEAN THEY CAN

COMMUNICATE

Some of the most challenging students are those who talk a lot

We need to discover

- **What is the student's experience**
- **How does he/she understand**

Imagine their auditory experience

→ **Difficulty shifting and re-engaging attention**

→ **Difficulty filtering background from foreground**

The Communication Message

➡ **Transient**

- Message is there and then gone
- Easily missed
  - ◆ Speech
  - ◆ Sign language

➡ **Non-transient**

- Message is present long enough to take in and process information
  - ◆ Printed matter
  - ◆ Objects
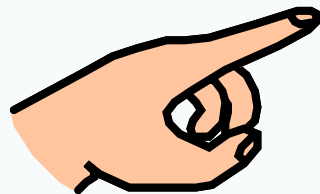
GESTURES

Donna Williams

My response to what people said to me would often be *delayed* as my mind had to take time to sort out what they had said. The more stress I was under,the worse it became.

Nobody Nowhere

WAIT
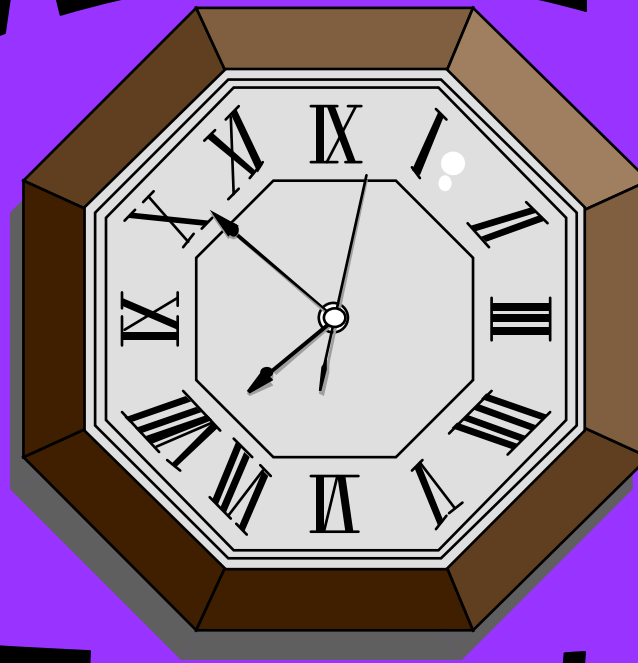
Wait Expectantly

the majority of students
with autism are

Visual Learners

Consider the learning style of other
students with communication and
behavior challenges

BRAIN RULES:
12 Principles for Surviving & Thriving at Work, Home, & School
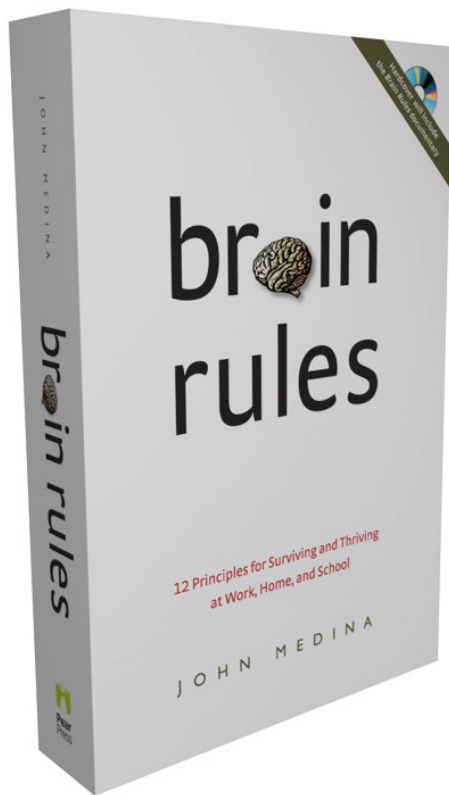
This information is NOT specifically about autism.

It is about **ALL** of us.

www.brainrules.net

Rule #10: VISION TRUMPS ALL SENSES

Vision trumps all other senses

➤ **Vision is by far our most dominant sense, taking up half of our brain's resources**

➤ **What we see is only what our brain tells us we see, and it's not 100 percent accurate**

➤ **The visual analysis we do has many steps**

The vision process is very complex

Vision trumps all other senses

We learn and remember best through **pictures,**

not through written or spoken words

SUMMARY

→ **Vision is probably the best single tool we have for learning anything**

SUMMARY

→ **The more VISUAL the input becomes, the more likely it is to be recognized and recalled**

We learn and remember best through pictures, not through written or spoken words

John Medina
Brain Rules
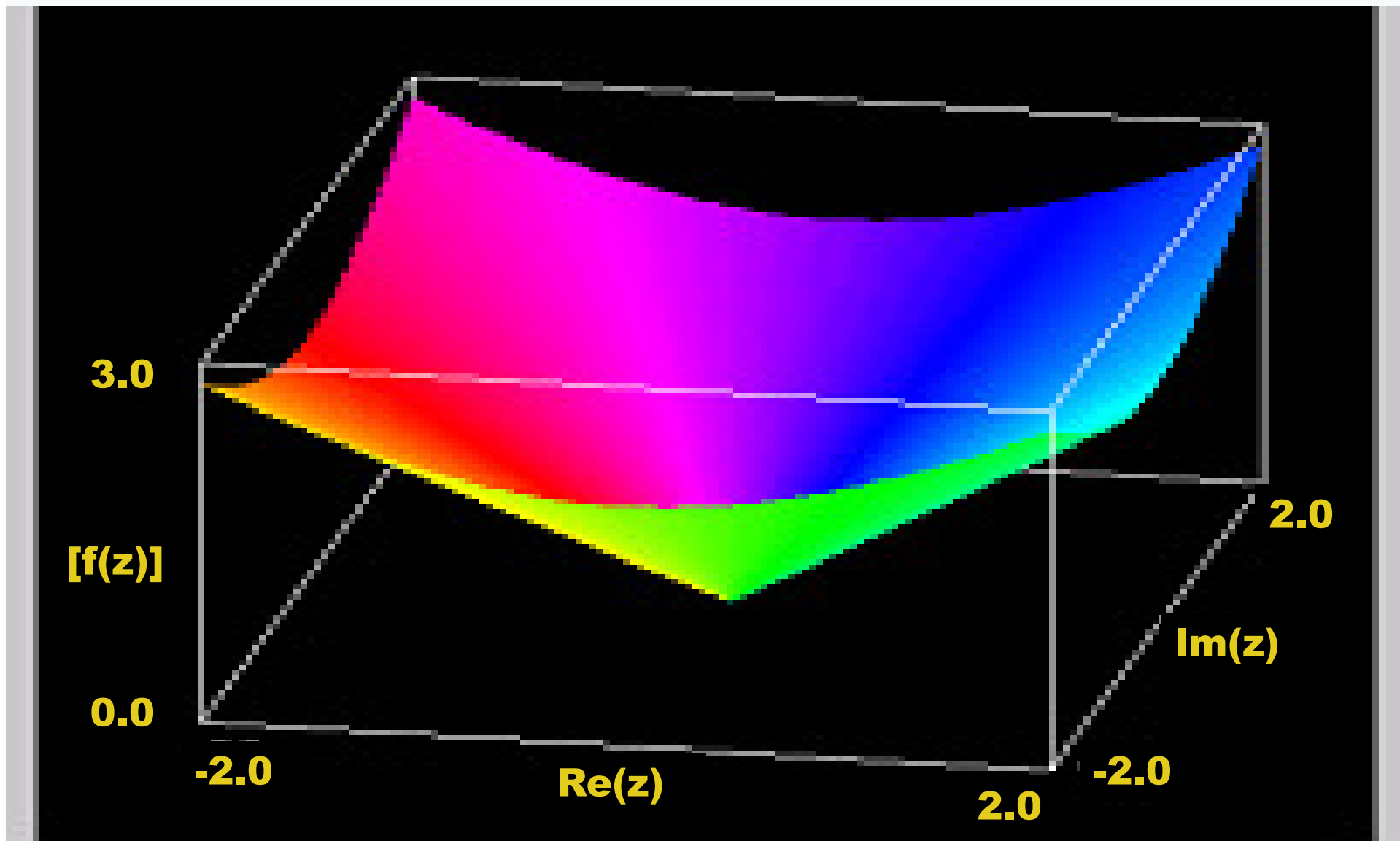
Now about AUTISM

Review of 200 children w/ASD

➔ **55% - No obvious understanding of simple verbal communication**

➔ **41% - Intermittent ability to understand single words and follow simple directions**

➔ **4% - Follow two-sequence commands, but inconsistently**

Greenspan & Wieder, Journal of Developmental & Learning Disoreders 1:87-141 (1997)

The Child with Special Needs

The majority of children in their sample were stronger in visual-spatial abilities than in auditory processing abilities.

Scans Show Sound-Processing Deficits in Autistic Kids In The NEWS

→ **Unique brain wave patterns**, spotted for the first time in autistic children, could help explain why the children have so much trouble communicating.

→ Communication issues may stem from **delays detected in processing of sounds**

→ They **process sounds a fraction of a second slower** than other children

→ That delay is only a fraction of a second, but when it's for every sound, the **lag time can cascade** into a major obstacle in speaking and understanding people

→ Imagine if it took a tiny bit longer than normal to understand each syllable. By the end of a whole sentence, one would be confused.

→ "This delay in processing certain types and streams of sound may underpin the subsequent language processing and communication impairment seen in autistic children,"

→ Uncertain whether the patterns found in the study exist in all autistic children

→ University of Texas - Radiological Society of North America

Think of these students as:

90% visual and 10% auditory
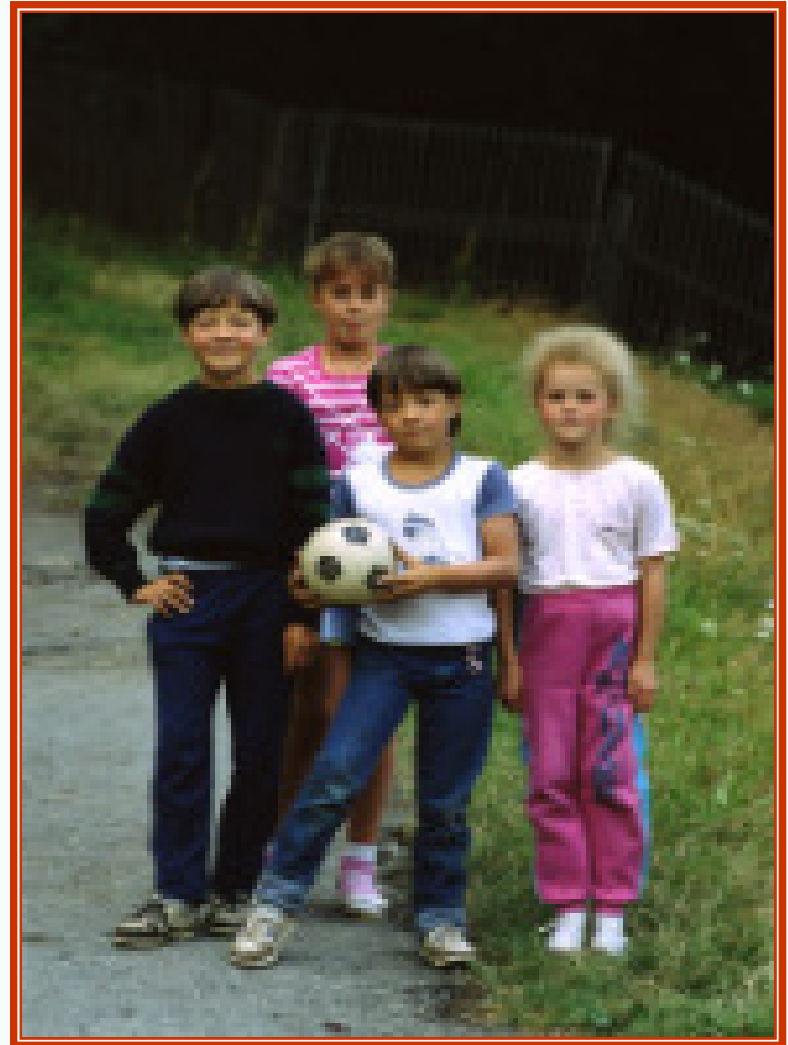
TYPICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

→ **Teaching strategies**

- Auditory vs. visual
- Language level
- Assumed knowledge
- Speed of training

→ **Set up their learning environment to accommodate for that**

→ **Develop teaching/ communication style to accommodate for that**

Sign up for E-NEWSLETTER

➡ **WWW.UseVisualStrategies.com**

VISUAL TOOLS

➡ ***Many* people use a *few* of these techniques**

➡ ***Few* people use *many* of them**
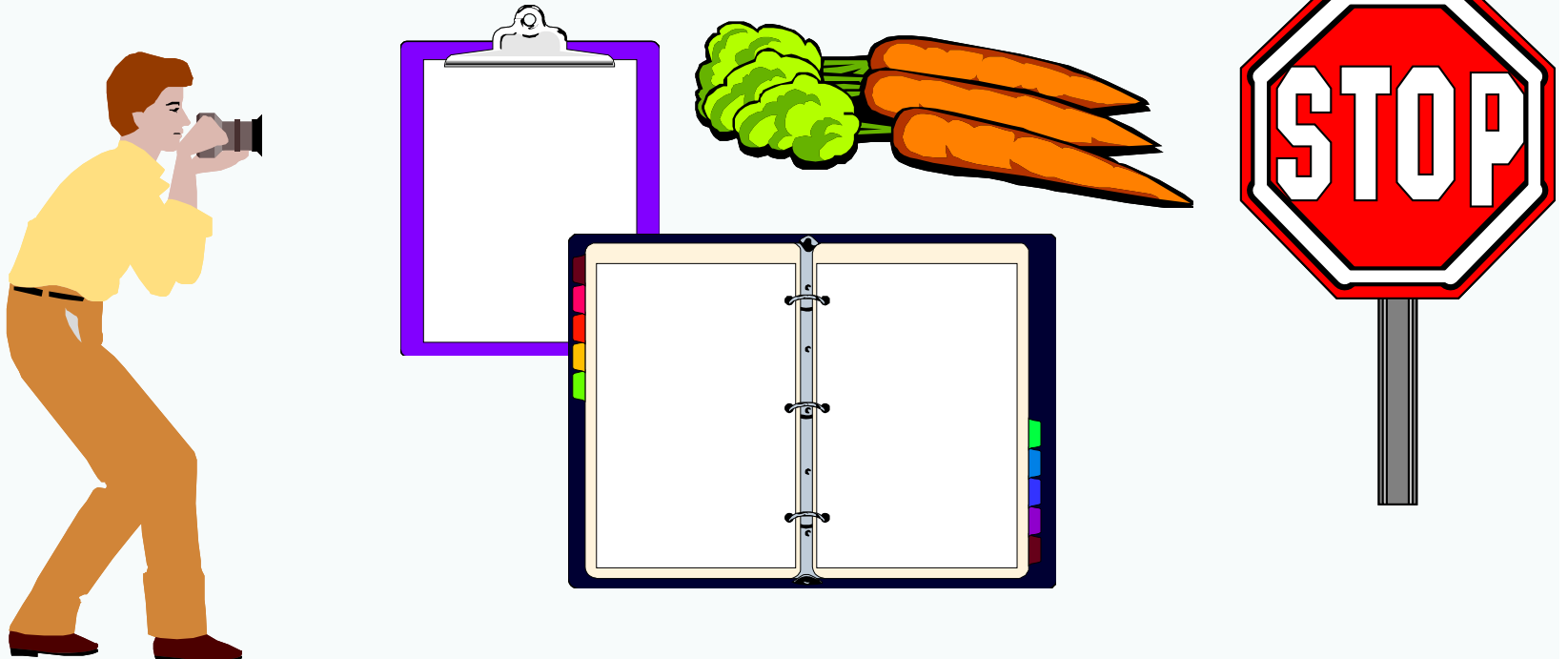
Focus on LOW TECH
Current transition to HI TECH options
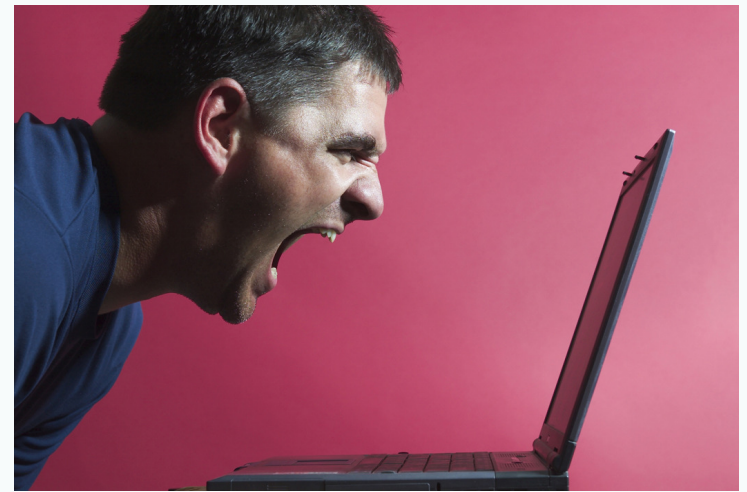
A few other toys

I LOVE MY IPHONE

There has been a technology explosion

- → **Calendar**
- → **Scheduling**
- → **Choices**
- → **Step by step**
- → **Conversation starters**
- → **Photos**
- → **And what are the other possibilities????**
- → **APPS**

- → **Apps articles posted at www.UseVisualStrategies.com**

Tech is not magic

The CAUTION about the tech explosion

Don't forget to identify the PURPOSE

Schedules

- ➔ **What is happening-regular**
- ➔ **What is happening-new or different**
- ➔ **What is the sequence of events**
- ➔ **What is changing or different**
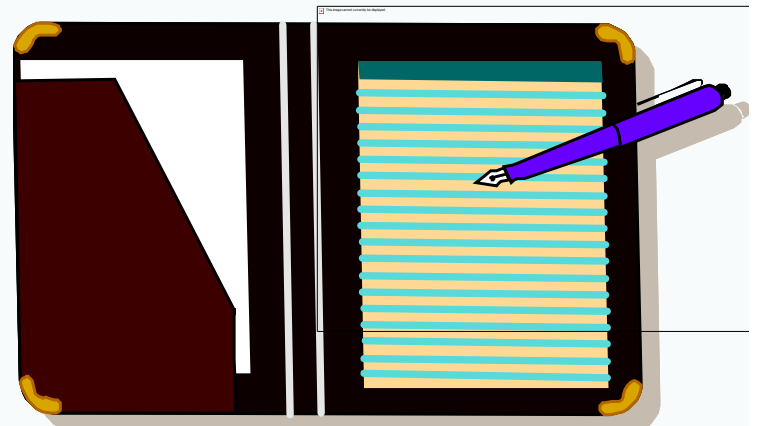
MYTH

**When you have a schedule. . .
that is all you need to do**

Calendars

→ **Give information about routine events**

→ **Give information about new experiences**

→ **What is changing or different?**

→ **A good communication tool about past, present, and future**

Visual Tools to Give Information

➡ **What is going to happen**

➡ **When something is going to happen**

➡ **What are the choices**

➡ **What is changing**

➡ **Who is coming**

➡ **Etc., Etc., Etc.**

Joey's Soccer game

6:00 Tuesday

Piano Lessons

Teaching Routines

Anna cries when Dad goes to work . . .
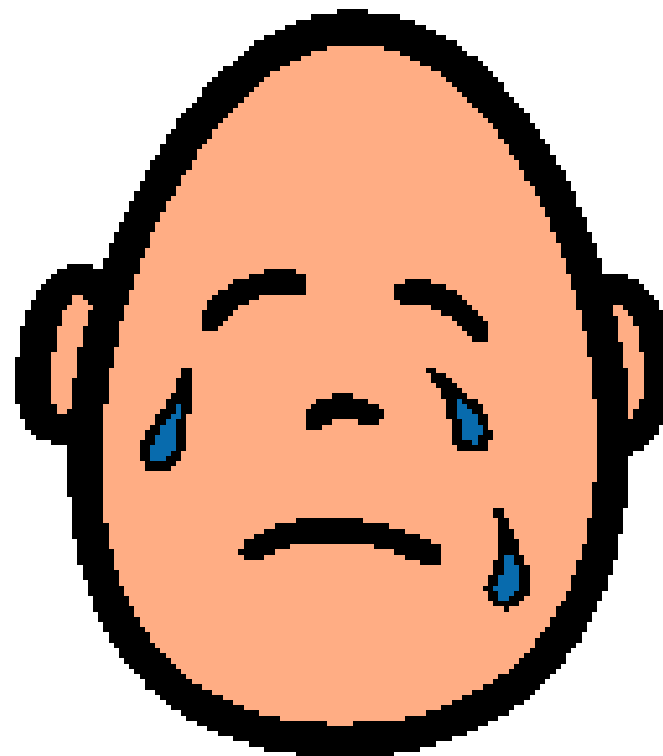
Teaching Routines

It is easier to teach a
NEW ROUTINE
than it is to change
an old behavior

Linda Hodgdon

Steps to teach a routine

1. **Choose what occurs frequently**
2. **Plan ahead**
3. **Give the routine a name**
   1. Time for bed
   2. Take a bath
   3. Get ready for lunch
   4. Say "hi" to Dad
   5. Do your work
4. **Decide steps in routine**
5. **Prepare visual supports**
6. **Teach with errorless learning**
7. **Be consistent**
8. **Follow through to completion**
9. **Repeat the routine**

Tools to Give Directions and Teach Routines

➔ **Get student attention**

➔ **Use specific and consistent wording**

➔ **Predictable order and sequence**
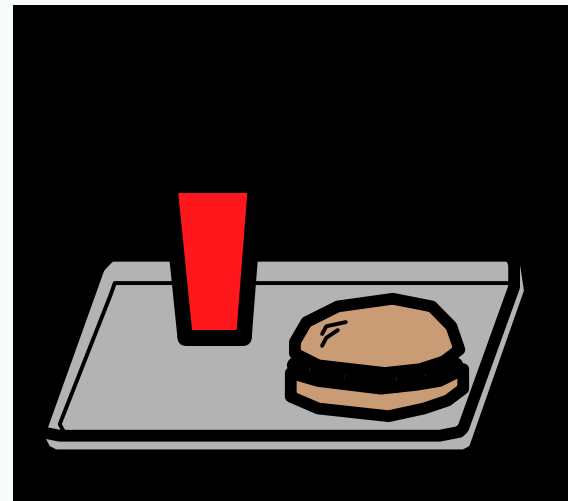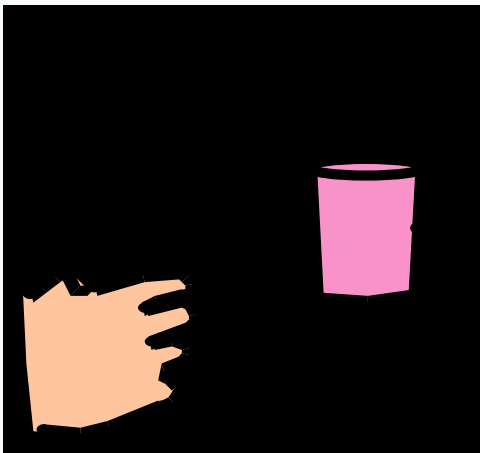
How do YOU give directions?
Teaching students to follow directions

- ➔ **Difficult to do**

- ➔ **Many "assumed" steps**

- ➔ **Sometimes we give too many steps**

- ➔ **Sometimes not enough**

- ➔ **Think about giving directions to teach a new task**

- ➔ **Some students need those prompts until they learn the task**

- ➔ **Some students need those prompts forever**

Father of the 10 year old with ADHD

Integrate Visual Tools into Daily Routines

- **Look at what students need to do**
  - Daily routines for personal independence
    - Bathroom
    - Grooming
    - Taking care of personal belongings
- **Look at what students need to learn**
  - School skills
    - How to be a student
  - Participate in home routines
    - How to be part of family
- **Skills for growing toward adulthood**

Visual Strategies: accomplish many purposes

- **Support** <u>understanding</u>
  - Help establish and maintain attention
- **Support** expression
- **Assist language processing**
- **Clarify communication**

I met a lady. . .

- She has a child with autism
- She got a call from her sister who got a job as an aide for a boy with autism who has meltdowns
  - No training
- When he has a meltdown, the "behavior plan" is to take him into the bathroom and wait until he calms down
  - Write down how long it took to calm down
  - Then go back to the room
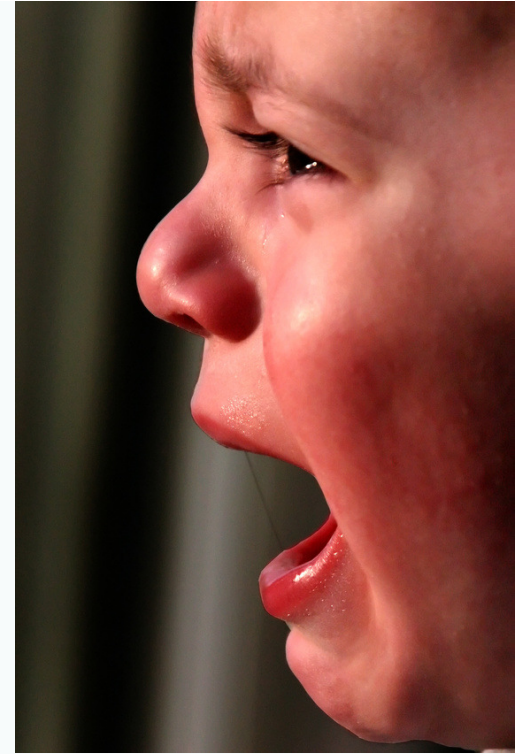
Begin to evaluate what is happening. . .what is the CAUSE

➜ **Many behavior difficulties are related to observable needs. Providing visual supports to structure environment, give information, define rules etc. can reduce or eliminate many problems**

➜ **Some students have behavior issues that are more complex or severe. They require a more thorough, formal assessment. A team with support staff such as the behavior analyst or behavioral psychologist will conduct a more formal evaluation**

Solving Behavior Problems in Autism

➤ **Identify the <u>causes</u> of behavior problems**

➤ **The <u>remedy</u> is to improve communication**

➤ **The <u>method</u> is to use visual strategies**

"The behavior-communication-visual strategy link"

Meet Alex

I met Alex's Mom at a conference

IF ONLY THEY UNDERSTOOD AUTISM

CURRENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

→ **INCLUDE**

- Behavior Modification

- Positive Behavior Support

- Functional Behavioral Analysis

- Applied Behavior Analysis

- ABC method of behavior analysis
  - Antecedent, behavior, consequence

TRADITIONAL BEHAVIORAL APPROACHES

➔ **Focus on changing child's *external* behavior**

➔ **May teach skills *out of context***

➔ **May not be sensitive to *learning style differences***

➔ **Presume student *understanding***

➔ **May not analyze cause of the problem**

Solutions to behavior need to match the *causes* of the behavior problems

→ **The first step is to identify the cause. . . .**

→ **Try to figure out why the problem is occurring. . . .**

→ **Use that information to develop the solution**

magic

DEFINE "BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS"

→ **WHEN STUDENT IS NOT DOING WHAT WE WANT HIM/HER TO BE DOING**

- range from annoying to self injurious
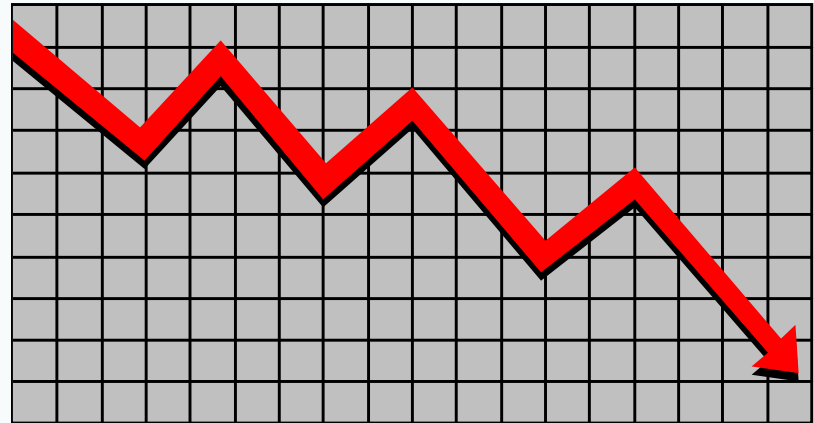
BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS:
the variables

➜ **THE CHILD**

- Age
- Ability level
- Personality
- Special needs
- Communication skills

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS: the variables

➜ **ME (teacher)**
- Childhood experiences
- Education
- Religious philosophy
- School policies
- Expectations
- Staff support
- *Personal control issues*
- *Common sense*

➜ **ME (parent)**
- Childhood experiences
- Education
- Religious philosophy
- Family dynamics
- Expectations
- Family support
- Culture
- *Personal control issues*
- *Common sense*

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS: the variables

- ➜ **ENVIRONMENT**
  - ■ Home
  - ■ School
  - ■ Community

- ➜ **EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS**
  - ■ Curriculum
  - ■ Building logistics
  - ■ Classroom routines

WHY DO BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS EXIST?

- **Age appropriate**
- **Match developmental level**
- **Childish behavior**
  - Tired
  - Hungry
  - Sick
  - Bored
  - Etc.
- **Childish misbehavior**
- **Family patterns**
  - Culture
  - Heredity

WHY DO BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS EXIST?

➡ **SENSORY DIFFERENCES**

- ■ Sight
- ■ Sound
- ■ Taste
- ■ Smell
- ■ Touch
- ■ Proprioception (the feedback you get from your muscles & joints
- ■ Vestibular (feedback about the position of your body in space)

Observation reveals many "behaviors" have a root in meeting sensory needs.

MEDICAL ISSUES

Medical treatment directed toward curing autism or reducing autistic characteristics

Medical treatment for co-occurring conditions

THE SHORT SUMMARY OF MEDICAL ISSUES:

•There are many treatments and therapies that are currently being explored

•The choices and results are highly individual for each child

•Medical issues can directly affect behavior

WHY DO BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS EXIST?

➔ **COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES**

■ Understanding
- ◆ Auditory
- ◆ Visual
- ◆ Pragmatic Skills
- ◆ Social Skills

■ Expression
- ◆ Verbal
- ◆ Nonverbal
- ◆ Pragmatic Skills
- ◆ Social Skills

Common Errors

➤ **Assuming communicative competence when it is not there**

  ■ Even if students talk a lot, you can observe difficulty with:

    ◆ Pragmatics
    ◆ Social judgments
    ◆ Conversation rules
    ◆ Effective communication

➤ **Mistaking problems in communication for problems in behavior**

Assessment of Behavior Situations
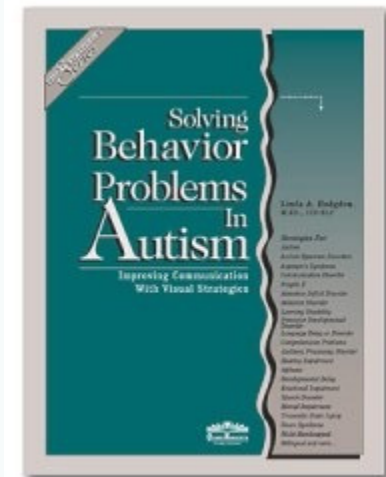
Adapted from **Solving Behavior Problems in Autism** © 1999 Linda Hodgdon

Who is the student?

➡ **Name:**

➡ **Age:**

➡ **Diagnosis:**

➡ **Overall Skill Level:**

➡ **Communication Skill Level:**

➡ **Social Skill Ability:**

➡ **Other Observations:**

Describe the problem

➤ What does the student do?

➤ What does the student fail to do?
   - <u>When</u> do problems occur?
   - How <u>frequently</u> does behavior occur?
   - Is there a <u>pattern</u>?

Describe the Problem

- What happens <u>before</u> the behavior occurs?

- How is the behavior currently being handled?

- What happens <u>after</u> the behavior occurs?

    - What does the student do after the behavior occurs

    - What does the communication partner do after the behavior occurs?

- Does the current management system work?

Defining the Event

➡ What is the situation?

- From the **student's** point of view

- From **communication partner's** point of view

- From **observer's** point of view

What is the **cause** of the behavior?

- Age
- Developmental level
- Childish behavior
- Family issue
- Environment
- Learned behavior
- Learned routines

- Sensory issue
- Medical need
- Communication problem
- Social skill problem
- Learning style difference

**One cause? More than one cause?
All of the above!**

What does the <u>function</u> (purpose) of the communication or behavior **appear** to be?

→ **Is there communicative intent?**

→ **Is it non-interactive?**

→ **Seek social interaction**
→ **Request**
→ **Getting need met**
→ **Gain information**
→ **Give information**
→ **Protest**
→ **Escape**
→ **Conversation**
→ **Entertainment**
→ **Other**

What needs to change?

➡ Communication
- ▪ Improve understanding
- ▪ Improve expression

➡ Teach
- ▪ Teach a new skill
- ▪ Develop a routine

➡ Modify environment
- ▪ Physical environment (the environment)
- ▪ Functional environment (the activity)
- ▪ Other people

➡ Get medical attention

➡ Accommodate for sensory need

TAKE NO ACTION-(RARE)

➡ **Live with it because it won't change**

➡ **Wait until outgrows it**

➡ **Ignore it and it will go away**

Where does communication fit in?

- **Improve communication understanding**
- **Increase social understanding**
- **Improve expression**
- **Teach social skills**

- **Learn specific skills**
- **Organize life**
- **Regulate own behavior**
- **Self-management**
- **Gain independence**
- **Other**

Consider Visual Strategies

- To support understanding
- To give information
- To give directions
- To organize the environment
- To teach skills

- To support expression
- To make requests and choices
- To teach specific communication skills
- To teach behavior regulation
- To support self-management
- Other

Solving Behavior Problems

Assessment leads to solutions. . .

➔ **Goal:** <u>prevention</u>

- ■ identify causes
- ■ teach skills
- ■ offer alternatives

➔ **Goal:** <u>effective interventions</u> **when problems do occur**

VISUAL STRATEGIES can become an integral part of both prevention and intervention

Visual strategies can support changes in behavior

- ➤ **Communication**
  - ■ Improve understanding
  - ■ Improve expression
  - ■ Teach social skills
- ➤ **Sensory**
  - ■ Make choices
  - ■ Give information
- ➤ **Medical**
  - ■ Reduce anxiety
  - ■ Provide structure
  - ■ Communicate problems

- ➤ **Learned behavior**
  - ■ Teach what to do
  - ■ Teach what not to do
  - ■ Establish rules
- ➤ **Learning style**
  - ■ Match their strengths
- ➤ **Clarify communication & clarify expectations**

Visual Tools to Give Information

➤ **What we call behavior problems can really be the result of a lack of understanding**

- Who
- What
- Where
- Why
- How

What is the Research?
(ie. giving information)

➡ Food choices presented to young man with autism

➡ Sometimes, the choices presented only verbally,

➡ Other times they were presented verbally together with photographs

➡ With verbal-only choices, he accepted about 66% of the foods he chose and exhibited frequent disruptive and aggressive behaviors

➡ When verbal plus photographic choices were provided, his acceptance rate for the foods he chose rose to approximately 85%

➡ In addition, there were many days on which he rejected no meals and exhibited no problem behaviors at mealtime. The authors hypothesized that the photographs may have clarified the choices available to him in a modality that he could understand more accurately than verbal speech.

Vaughn, B., & Horner, R. (1995). Effects of concrete versus verbal choice systems on problem behavior. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 11, 89-92.

Visual Tools to Establish Rules

→ **Tell what to do**

→ **Tell what not to do**

→ **Define consequences (If. . .Then)**

→ **Redirect student when there is a problem**

Managing Transitions

➡ **Transitions are tough especially if. . .**

- Unexpected surprise
- Unknown destination or activity
- Moving to disliked anything
- Leaving something favorable
- Pattern of resisting transitions

Dear Linda. . .

➡ **It has been quite a challenging month for me, since we relocated to a new home**

➡ **He has handled the transition quite well**
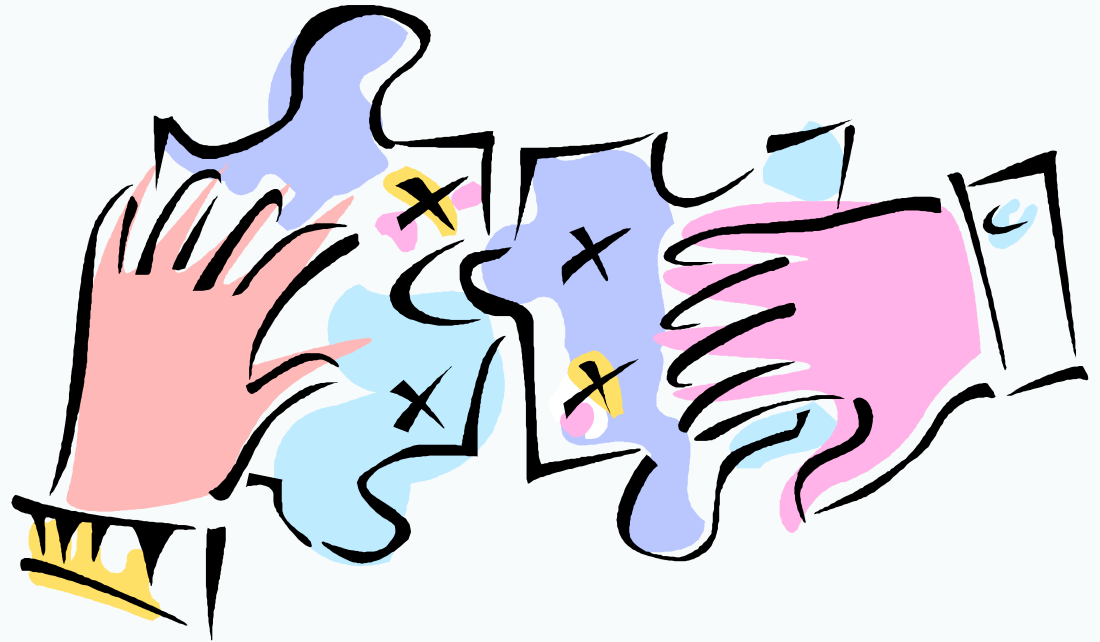
But the problem. . .

→ **He is in first grade this year with a new teacher**

→ **Having a bit of difficulty in transitioning at the end of the day to go home**

→ **The teacher didn't understand why he didn't want to go home**

→ **Matthew has difficulty with expressive language & did not express why**

→ **He began expressing with his body language, whining a bit and eventually became very upset all the way home**

Cause. . .

→ **I knew the reason why the behavior was occurring**

→ **He wanted to stay and play the computer in the classroom**
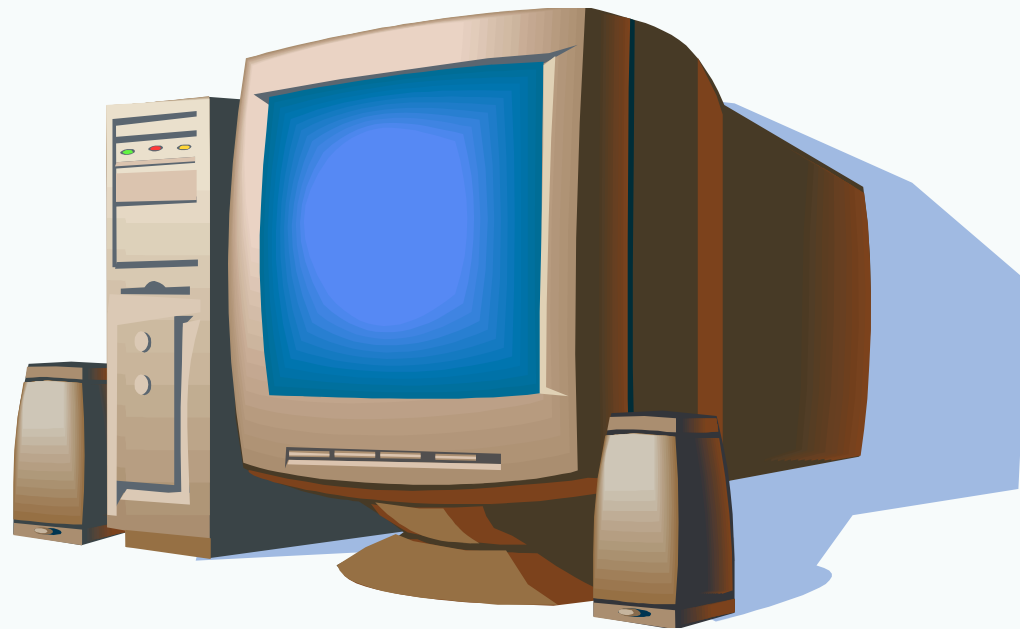
Teamwork

- Teacher asked me to give her any solutions to resolve the problem

- I took opportunity to reference your Visual Strategies

- I told her it would be helpful write out a card for him that identified the sequence of steps that take place to prepare him for the transition of when it was time to go home and I gave her some ideas

Validation

➔ **I also talked to Matthew to validate that I understood what he was trying to communicate to me**

- ■ why he wanted to stay
- ■ also why we had to go home
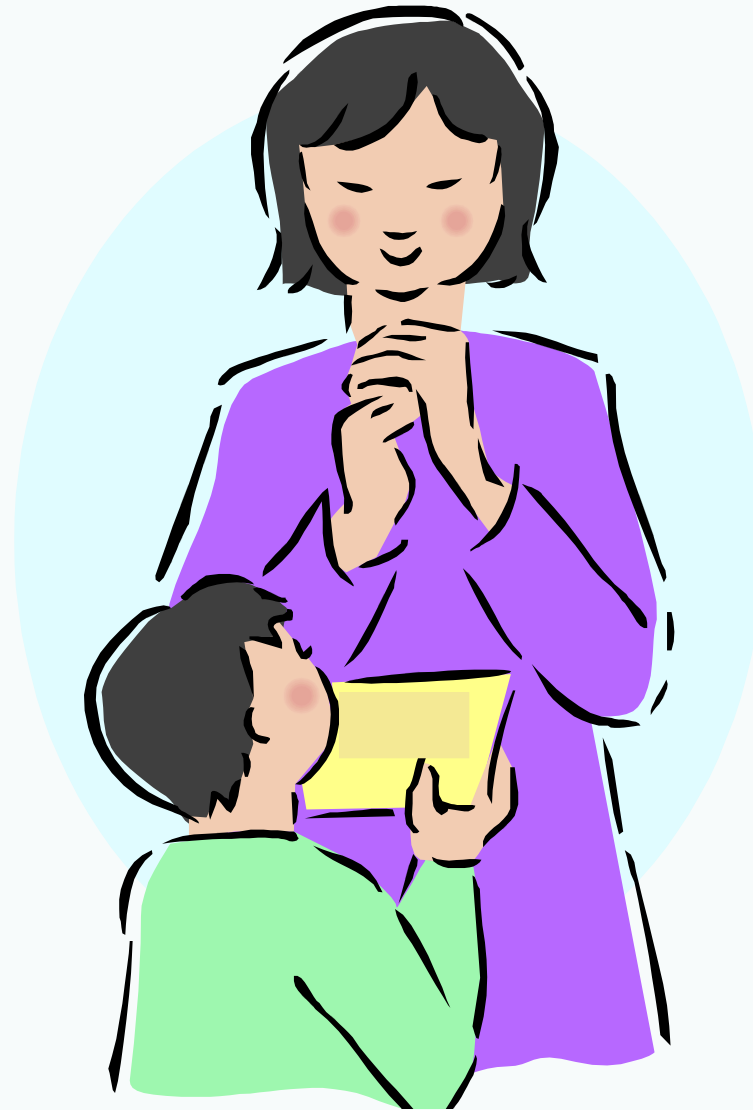
Follow through

→ **The teacher did make a transition list**

→ **Today when I picked him up from school the transition to go home was much better without him getting so upset**

I learned a few things from this scenario

- **It was important for me to validate that I understood what he was trying to communicate**
- **He needed help in sequencing through the transition**
- **He needed to understand the reason why we had to go home**

Visual Tools to Teach Self-Regulation

➡ **Teaching choices and alternatives to inappropriate behavior**

➡ **Teaching what to do in difficult or challenging situations**

Visual Strategies to Improve Social Skills

- **Communication**
- **Behavior**
- **Social Skills**

California Survey –
MOST REQUESTED SERVICES

➜ **Social skills/groups were the most requested service families wanted to receive**

➜ **Fifty-three percent (53%) of the families reported that their child plays with no one outside of school.**

Visual Strategies to Improve Social Skills

QUESTION:

What are the social skill challenges that you have to deal with?

- Adam gets anxious and asks a lot of questions when the routine changes.
- She doesn't look at or pay attention to other people.
- He does not greet other students.
- Tim ignores people who greet him.
- When I try to get him to look at me he turns his head away.
- She doesn't say thank you.
- Jennifer pulls away when Dad tries to get her to sit on his lap.
- He makes rude noises.
- Brad hums all the time.
- He talks to himself.
- Other children tease him.
- Tony laughs when another student is crying or upset.
- Jeff keeps asking the same questions over and over.
- Kenny doesn't have friends. He doesn't play with the other children.
- Allison is always late for class.
- Justin pushes other students away if they get too close to his trucks.
- He won't allow anyone to touch his toys.

Visual Strategies to Improve Social Skills

QUESTION:

What are the social skills these students need to have to be successful in your environment?

How do we typically teach social skills?

1. We teach social skills *randomly*
2. We tend to tell children what *not* to do
3. We *correct* **(primarily incidental correction)**
4. We *react*
5. We expect students to know what to do and how to do it

Fortunately, this random, negative, incidental, reactionary system works for a lot of students for a lot of skills.

Particularily Significant in ASD Establishing a "social connection"

➡ **INVOLVES DEVELOPING SKILLS SUCH AS**

- Joint Attention
- Imitation
- Turn Taking
- Staying Power

These skills can emerge effectively through interactive PLAY.

"Giggle Time". . . Rough house PLAY . . .Be silly. . . Play games. . ."I'm gonna get you". . . "Peek-a-Boo"

Programs stressing building the "social connection"

- **Floortime**
  - Stanley Greenspan
- **Relationship Development Intervention (RDI)**
  - Steven Gutstein
- **Communicating Partners**
  - James D. MacDonald
- **Hanen Program**
  - More Than Words
  - TalkAbility

Meta-Analysis of School-Based Social Skills Interventions for Children with ASD

➔ **Identified 55 studies**

➔ **Analyzed them**

➔ **Measured intervention, maintenance and generalization of social skills**

➔ **Results = social skills interventions have been minimally effective for children with ASD**

This is what they found

➡️ **School based social skills interventions are minimally effective for children with ASD**

This is what they found

➡️ **Individual interventions produced higher generalization effects that group interventions**

➡️ **(not significant differences)**

One conclusion

→ **Intervention in child's typical classroom produced significantly better maintenance & generalization than removing child from classroom**

→ **Decontextualized programming**

  (ie "pull out" settings) leads to poor maintenance & generalization

→ **Therefore:**

- Select social skill interventions that can be reasonably implemented IN CONTEXT in multiple naturalistic settings

- This is important for children with ASD who may have considerable difficulty transferring skills from one setting to another

****Only one study did this****

→ **Only one study systematically matched the type of intervention strategy with the type of skill deficits of individual students**

→ **Intervention should be designed to address individual needs of child rather than forcing child to "fit" into selected strategy.**

WHAT TO TEACH

We may have to specifically teach skills that other children learn incidentally

(Other children learn by osmosis, imitation, trial & error, responding to correction, etc.)

HOW TO TEACH

Use visual strengths

Teach Social Skills –
what is already available "out there"

➡ **Books**

➡ **Video**

➡ **TV**

➡ **Photographs**

➡ **Computer**

➡ **Real life demonstration**

Specifically designed visual tools

➔ **We create something VISUAL to**

- Meet a specific need

- Teach a specific skill

- Provide support to accomplish a task or routine

- Give information

- Prompt behavior

- Demonstrate how to do something

- And more. . .

SOCIAL STORIES

- Developed by Carol Gray
- Stories designed to help students know how to handle social situations appropriately
- Written to help students understand social cues and social information
- Generally written to address specific situations
- This technique has produced positive changes in student responses to targeted situations

WRITTEN STORIES

- Giving students information in a written form similar to Social Stories

- Does not follow the specified format of a Social Story

- Does give students information

  - about life events

  - to help handle situations

Writing little stories

➤ **Natalie was walking down the hall behind Cindy. Natalie kept stepping on Cindy's heels (on purpose).(This is a recurring event.) Cindy turned around and punched her. Guess who got in trouble.**

  ■ Help Cindy write a little story that talks about how to handle that situation in a different way.

Children's printable e-books includes topics for working on emotional development, social skills, behavioral skills, communication skills, safety skills, and daily living skills
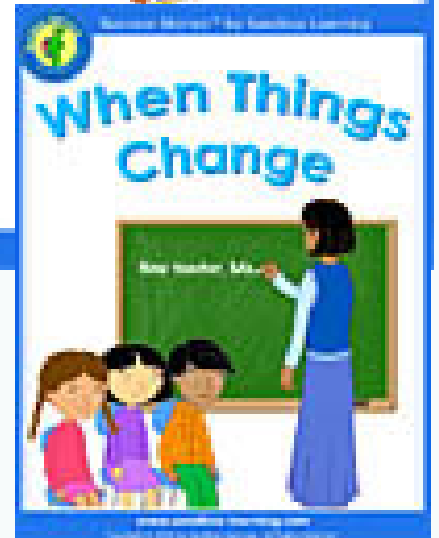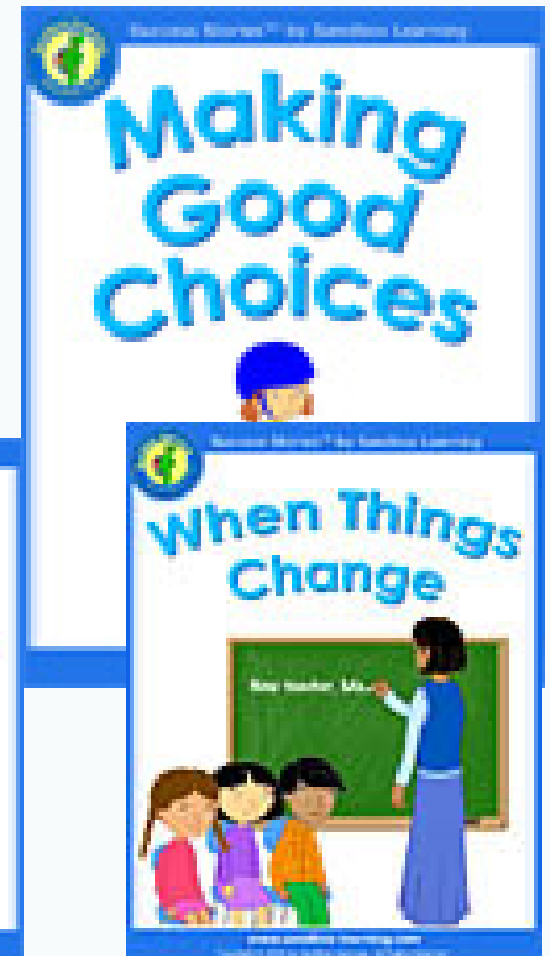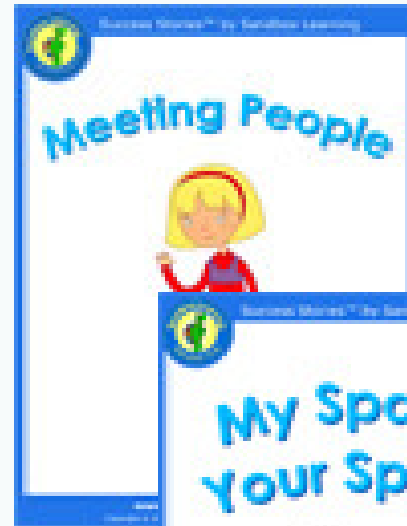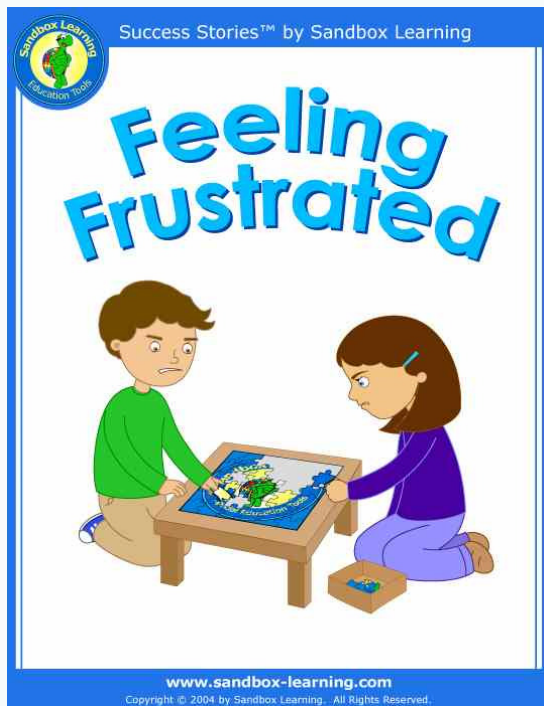
www.sandbox-learning.com

Conversation Starters Communication Starters

Using visual tools to support conversation interactions

Conversation Books

→ **Initiate conversation**

→ **Respond to someone else's initiation**

→ **What do you talk about?**
- What do you tell?
- What do you ask?

Conversation Books help "jump start" social conversation.

Pictures & video in phone,iPad

➔ **Use as conversation starters**

➔ **Does this make "conversation books" seem "old fashioned" ??????**

Discovering the Power of Video for Teaching Social Skill Success

Teaching Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders & Related Learning Needs

Why video NOW?

➡ **We have video cameras**

➡ **The modern technology revolution**

- In my digital camera

- On my cell phone

- Plus lots of video cameras that are inexpensive and easy to use

Technology advances

→ **It's all about the editing**

- I created a video that took weeks to edit in a sophisticated editing room
- Only recently – editing capabilities have improved so editing video has become more "user friendly"
  - ◆ Special software
  - ◆ In camera editing
  - ◆ Easy to view & redo
  - ◆ It's USER FRIENDLY for almost everyone

And one more thing. . .

- All the equipment and software has become very affordable
- School budgets now support this technology
- Families find this technology at reasonable cost

Autism has not changed –
The technology has changed-
BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO KNOW
WHAT TO DO WITH IT

Video Modeling

➔ **A Meta-Analysis of Video Modeling & Video Self-Modeling Interventions for Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders** **(Bellini, et.al. Exceptional Children: Spring 2007)**

➔ **Video modeling and Video Self-Modeling (VSM) are effective intervention strategies for addressing**

  ▪ social-communication skills
 ▪ Functional skills
  ▪ Behavior

In Children and adolescents with ASD

Studies show VIDEO can be used to:

→ **Observe correct behavior**

→ **Teach imaginative play skills**

→ **Teach perspective taking**

→ **Increase already existing behaviors**

→ **Model then imitate play**

→ **Teach domestic, hygiene, self-care, daily living, jobs and more**

→ **Teach academics**

→ **Receptive & expressive vocabulary**

→ **Organization skills**

→ **Appropriate behavior**

→ **Social interaction skills**

→ **Handling transitions**

→ **What are other possibilities?**

What are they learning?
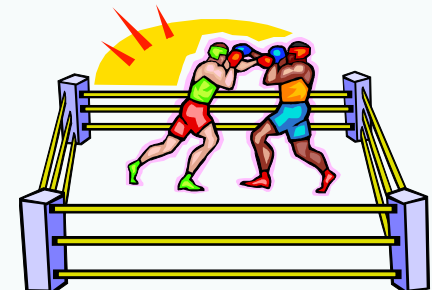
View behavior challenges
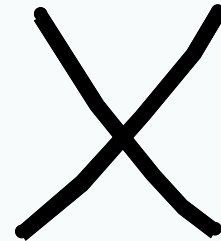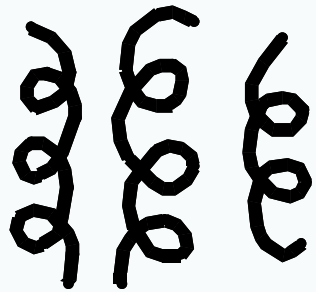and social skill challenges as

Opportunities to Teach

CREATING VISUAL TOOLS

Creating Visual Tools

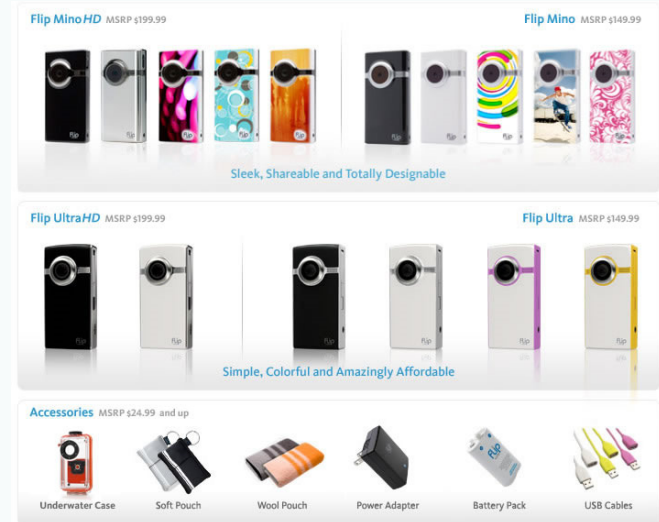→ **use a** *form* **that the student understands quickly and easily**

TEST YOUR SKILLS

➡ **What does it say?**
➡ **What does it mean?**

Creating Visual Tools favorite equipment:

➡ **ITouch – IPhone**

➡ **Video camera – FLIP**

➡ **Kodak Zi8**

➡ **Digital camera**

➡ **Computer & printer**

➡ **Scanner**

➡ **Art**

- ■ Boardmaker by Mayer-Johnson
- ■ Clip art from CDs
- ■ Art from the internet

Creating Visual Tools

→ **DO:**

- Use what the student understands quickly and easily
- Use variety of resources
- Observe how students respond to what you create
- Create tools that are universally understood

→ **DON'T**

- Make tools that are too complicated or too difficult for students to understand
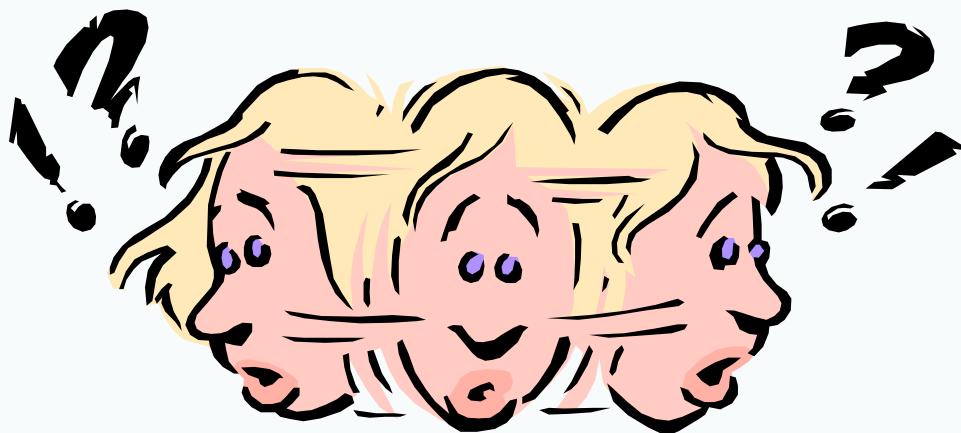- Create arbitrary rules about how visual tools must look

The Nuts & Bolts

→ **Use pictures, logos, signs, stickers & art from a variety of sources**

→ **Everything does not have to look alike**

→ **Velcro**

→ **Magnets**

→ **Clips**

→ **Notebooks**

→ **Photo albums**

→ **Laminating**

→ **Storage**

Collect the materials so you have them when you need them

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

➡ Laminating

➡ **Where do you put visuals?**

➡ **How do you store them?**

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

➡ **How do I know if my student will benefit from using visuals?**

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is important for success with visual strategies?
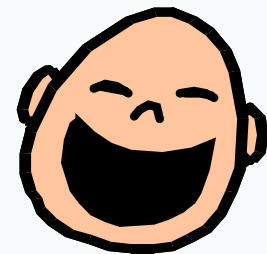
Establishing a SOCIAL CONNECTION

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- How does the use of visual strategies affect Speech & Language Therapy?
- Who uses the visuals?
- Who makes them?

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

But…I want my child to talk!!! Won't using
visual strategies prevent my child
from talking?

NO. . .NO. . .NO. . .

- **Visual tools do NOT prevent students from talking**
- **Visual tools DO improve communication**
- **Visual tools DO reduce frustration**
- **Visual tools DO reduce behavior situations**

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will students become handicapped because they use visual tools?

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When do you start to eliminate visuals from the student's life?

Visual Strategies can Become Life Long Supports

The Planner

Using Visual Strategies for Long Term Independence

http://www.theplannerguide.com/

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I get _____
(fill in someone's name, parent, teacher, aide, etc.)

to use some visuals with

this student.

Linda Hodgdon's tools to help PASS-IT-ON

→ **Visual Strategies for Improving Communication**

→ **Solving Behavior Problems in Autism**

→ **Little Books to Share**

  - Ten Tried and True Tools for Turning Trials into Teamwork
  - What are Visual Strategies?

→ **Visual Strategies Workshop-Video Program**

  - Training program complete with handouts & support materials

→ **Poster: When I SEE it then I understand**

→ **T-shirts: When I SEE it then I understand**

→ **E-newsletter: Another View with Linda Hodgdon**

  - Encourage therapists, educators and parents to sign up at www.UseVisualStrategies.com   (It's FREE)
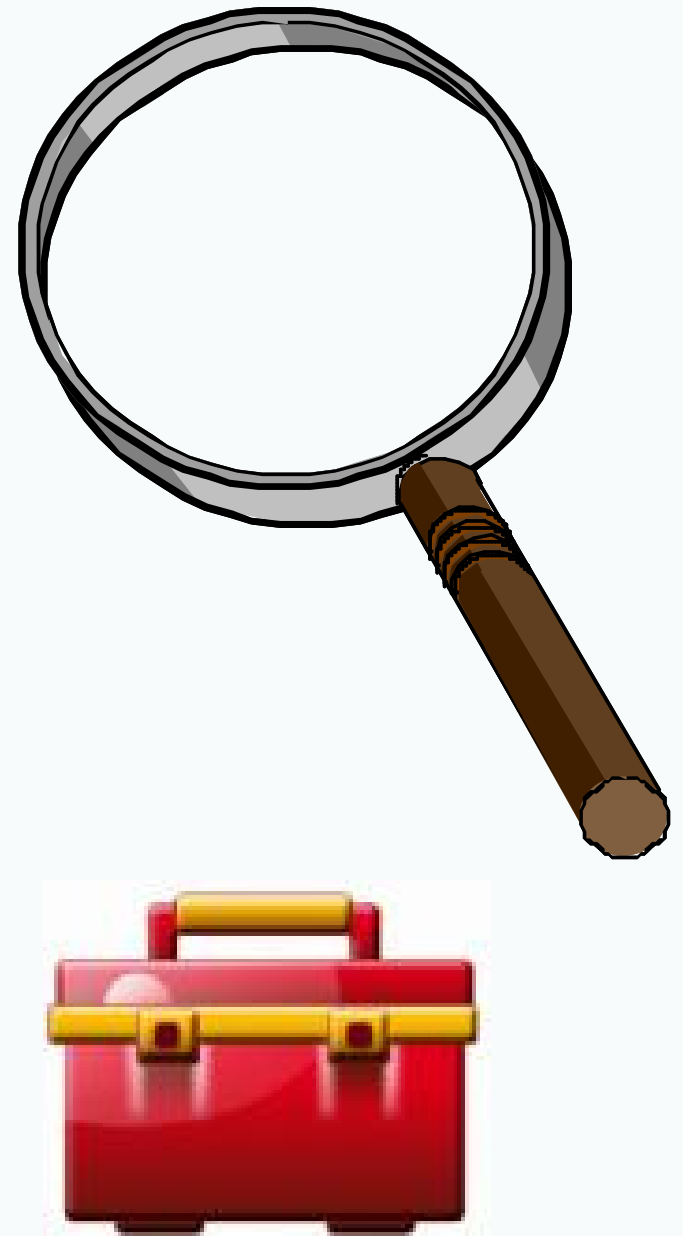
Visual Strategies are NOT the Real World. . . . . . .

Visual Strategies are NOT the GOAL

Visual Strategies

Our goal is to discover how using visual strategies to support communication will make a difference in each student's life

Check these out:

UseVisualStrategies.com

AutismFamilyOnline.com

LindaHodgdon.com